THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

connections

Equality of Opportunity and Freedom from Discrimination

Human Rights Work Honoured

Sherri Helgason, Canadian Human Rights Commission, watches as Tait Palsson lights a candle, the world-wide symbol for human rights

On December 9, 2015, the eve of International Human Rights Day, people gathered to honour, celebrate and meet the recipients of the 2015 Human Rights Awards.

Sherri Helgason, Director of the National Aboriginal Initiative at the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Michelle Falk, Executive Director of the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties hosted the celebration, which began with Diane Dwarka, MHRC Commissioner acknowledging that they were gathered on the traditional territory of the peoples of Treaty 1 and the Métis homeland. She welcomed everyone with an opening prayer.

Michelle Falk, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties presents the Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award to Christie McLeod.

The 2015 Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award was presented to Christie McLeod. This young woman's human rights activities range from raising awareness with respect to Shoal Lake 40 First Nations to women's rights. In order to help keep Winnipegers in the know about important human rights events, causes and issues she created the newly launched website, www.humanrightshub.ca.

In honour of the Truth and Reconciliation Report and Calls to Action, the Commitment Award of Manitoba was presented to Meet Me @ the Bell Tower to honour the work that it has done

Continued on page 2

The Rights Connection

MHRC Joins Commissions Across Canada in Support of the TRC's Calls to Action

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission (MHRC) challenges all Manitobans to actively take steps to implement the TRC's Calls to Action - to repair, strengthen and build relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Reconciliation among these groups will require meaningful action by governments, public service agencies, educators, religious institutions, media, the private sector and individual citizens.

Soon after the June 2015 release of the Interim TRC Report the MHRC began work on a 3-year focus project designed to identify the systemic issues that underlie discrimination on the basis of race. The project is also designed to gather information about how the MHRC can facilitate reconciliation within its complaint process and via its mandate to educate Manitobans about the rights and responsibilities in The Human Rights Code. The initial stage of this project will focus on discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

Vice Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, Loretta Ross, is pleased to connect the MHRC with Elders in the community who can offer guidance to the MHRC as they develop ways of connecting with the Indigenous communities. "We will be establishing an Advisory Council early in the New Year to provide us with their advice and guidance throughout the project. We will speak with Indigenous

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

and continues to do towards reconciliation within Manitoba. The organizing group was pleased that so many people from the Bell Tower Family was able to attend the ceremony to accept their well deserved award.

Both Christie McLeod and Meet Me @ the Bell Tower also received signed letters from the Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *"Both of these award recipients are models of the type of champions we require to achieve reconciliation in Canada!"*

The MHRC, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties congratulates the 2015 recipients and nominees for advancing human rights.

The Meet Me at the Bell Tower Family accepting the Commitment Award of Manitoba

Judith Heumann Speaks at CMHR on International Human Rights Day

Ms Judith Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, United States Department of State spoke on International Human Rights Day, December 10, at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The event was co-hosted by the Disabilities Issues office and the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

Before speaking at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Judith Heumann takes a tour and views the disability rights display, which features her story.

Following a tour of the museum, Board of Commissioner Chairperson, Yvonne Peters, introduced Ms Heumann to a crowd of more than one hundred people in the Museum's Garden of Contemplation.

Ms Judith Heumann is an internationally recognized leader in the disability community and a lifelong civil rights advocate. For more than 30 years, Ms. Heumann has been involved on the international front working with disabled people's organizations and governments around the world to advance the human rights of disabled people. She has been active with Disabled Peoples' International, Rehabilitation International and numerous Independent Living Centers throughout the world. She co-founded the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley California and the World Institute on Disability in Oakland California.

Continued from page 1

peoples at a grassroots level across the province to gather information about the barriers they face to full participation in society due to ancestry. The MHRC wants to ensure that every step of our process to engage the public around issues of discrimination is thoughtful and focused on objectives that we can deliver."

The MHRC will be releasing further details about the project in the coming months.